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INFO RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2308  
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 0030  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 000010

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA, EUR/ERA, EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2020

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [CU](#) [DA](#)

SUBJECT: CUBA: DANISH OFFICIALS CAN'T GET VISAS DUE TO  
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENT

REF: 09 STATE 131637

Classified By: CDA Terence P. McCulley; reason 1.4 (b, d)

[1](#)1. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Please see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Denmark covers Cuba from Mexico City, and has been unable to get visas for officials to visit Cuba due to its insistence on engaging with civil society as well as the GOC. It assesses that Spain has backed off some on abolishing the EU Common Position on Cuba, due to negative reactions from other EU members including Denmark. MFA would like to know the Administration's assessment of prospects for further loosening of Helms-Burton. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (C) Pol-EconCouns delivered reftel demarche January 6 to MFA Americas Department Head Morten Lauridsen, new USA desk officer Nikolaj Waedegaard and Latin America Section Head Kit Clausen. Clausen is Denmark's representative in the EU-Cuba Working Group. Lauridsen said it is "a strong Danish tradition" to meet with civil society as well as the government, and that insistence has made it "impossible" for Danish officials to get visas to visit Cuba, which Denmark covers from Mexico City. Clausen assessed that Spain has backed off some from the position stated by its Foreign Minister that the EU Common Position on Cuba should be abolished. She attributed this change to reactions from other EU member states including Denmark, that want to see human-rights improvements before changing the Common Position. She noted that the EU's 2008 decision to eliminate its Special Measures on Cuba had not led to improvement in Cuba's performance. Therefore, she predicted Spain and like-minded countries would find it very difficult to persuade their EU partners to change the Common Position.

[1](#)4. (C) While welcoming the steps the Obama Administration has taken to loosen restrictions on Cuba, Lauridsen asked about the prospects for easing of Helms-Burton. He remarked that USG restrictions on Cuba are often cited as an excuse by Latin American leaders for not having warmer ties with Washington. Lauridsen also sought the USG's view on the ALBA Alliance and Cuba's role in it.

[1](#)5. (C) ACTION REQUESTED: Post would appreciate any response from the Department that we can share with the Danes regarding Helms-Burton prospects and the ALBA Alliance (see para. 4).  
MCCULLEY